

Approval Clears Way for Construction of Critical Section of Sand Barriers
May 27, 2010

WASHINGTON D.C. – Today, U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon made the following statement after National Incident Commander for the BP oil spill, Admiral Thad Allen, approved the implementation of a section of Louisiana's barrier island project proposal that could help stop oil from coming ashore. Last week, Congressman Melancon joined the entire Louisiana delegation in [sending a letter](#) to Admiral Allen and the Army Corps urging approval of the state's barrier island plan.

"I welcome the good news that Admiral Allen has signed off on a critical section of sand barriers to help keep oil from pushing into our coastal marshes. It will be even better news when we hear that dredges are churning sand.

"Everyone involved in this disaster response has to be willing to cut the red tape and do whatever it takes to stay in front of the oil. Our situation is critical, and the need to protect our coast is too urgent to move cautiously on any idea that may help in this fight. Sometimes it's better to act now and ask for forgiveness later than to wait for permission."

"As Louisianians, we will fight this fight with every resource we've got. If we can make an impact, I don't care whose idea it was or whether we have permission. All I care is that we get it done and protect Louisiana."

Congressman Melancon has been leading efforts in Louisiana to coordinate the private, federal, state, and local response to the oil leak caused by the explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil platform one month ago. He represents in Congress the areas of coastal Louisiana most directly affected by the oil leak, including Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Terrebonne, Lafourche and southern Jefferson Parishes. The Deepwater Horizon platform was located 50 miles off the coast of Louisiana's Third Congressional District.

Congressman Melancon held a [town hall in Houma](#) last weekend to listen to constituent concerns about the oil leak disaster in the Gulf of Mexico and provide information about the response efforts. Congressman Melancon invited representatives from the Coast Guard, BP, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Small Business Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, and officials from Terrebonne, Lafourche and St. Mary Parishes to take part in the town hall to help answer questions and listen to concerns.

Earlier this month, Congressman Melancon organized a [town hall in Chalmette](#) to share information with constituents about the oil disaster response efforts. Representatives from the Coast Guard, BP, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Louisiana State University, Louisiana's seafood industry, and St. Bernard Parish officials answered questions and listened to concerns.

Congressman Melancon has also worked to bring federal attention to the health needs of Louisianians impacted by the oil leak in the Gulf. He has [requested the federal government](#)

send temporary clinics to the more rural coastal areas to treat the people being exposed to hazardous materials. The clinics would provide medical checkups to people who have come in contact with the oil and also assist in monitoring the health effects of the oil leak on south Louisianians.

Congressman Melancon has also sent a letter to the Administration requesting assistance in establishing temporary [mental health services](#) to help residents cope with the BP oil disaster in the Gulf. Congressman Melancon has hosted two recent town hall meetings in south Louisiana where he has heard from residents about the need for more mental health services.

Congressman Melancon has been working closely with parish and federal officials to monitor response efforts and provide assistance where needed. Last weekend, he toured the coast along Terrebonne, Lafourche, Jefferson, and Plaquemines Parishes by helicopter with U.S. Coast Guard Captain Edwin Stanton, the Federal Coordinating Officer for the disaster, and a representative from BP. They surveyed the impact of the oil leak from the Deepwater Horizon disaster on the coastline west of the Mississippi River.

Congressman Melancon has also [toured by boat](#) the coastal marshes in St. Bernard Parish with parish officials and viewed the efforts of local fishermen to deploy boom. He has also met with Terrebonne and Lafourche Parish officials and been briefed on their plans for boom deployment and other protective measures to prevent the oil sheen from damaging their coastal marshes. Over one million feet of protective boom have been deployed to protect Louisiana's fragile coastal marshes from the oil slick.

In his conversations with local fishermen and parish officials involved in laying the boom, Congressman Melancon learned they face a severe shortage in boom material, hindering their ability to protect the coast. In response, Congressman Melancon [sent a letter to President Barack Obama](#) requesting military aircraft be used to help bring protective boom to the Gulf Coast more quickly. The President granted his request and within a few days of receiving Congressman Melancon's letter, the first Air Force aircraft arrived in Belle Chasse with additional boom.

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